

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PANEL
HELD ON FRIDAY, 2 MARCH 2018 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A -
WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS**

Present:

Rashik Parmar MBE (Chair)	IBM's Academy of Technology
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tom Keeney	BT
Karen Milner	Paths and Progress
Councillor Mohammed Rafique	Leeds City Council
Mark Roberts	Beer Hawk Ltd
Glynn Robinson	BJSS

In attendance:

Merran McRae	Wakefield Council from minute 6
Sue Cooke	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Emma Longbottom	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sonya Midgley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority from minute 6
Andrew Atack	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Barratt, Ian Billyard, Nick Bowen, Peter Duffy, Professor Margaret House, Sue Sorozan, Amanda Stainton and Councillor Daniel Sutherland.

2. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared by members at the meeting.

3. Exempt information – Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items on the agenda requiring exclusion of the press and public.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 4 December 2017

Further to minute 6 (c) (iii) resolution should read “that an update on the Government’s Careers Strategy be provided at the next meeting”

Resolved:: Subject to the amendment above that the minutes of the Employment and Skills Panel held on 4 December 2017 be approved.

5. Chair's update

Julie Colley has stepped down as a Panel member and she was thanked for her contribution to the Employment and Skills Panel.

The representative from the Department of Work and Pensions was unable to attend the meeting and will now attend the next meeting on 1 June 2018.

6. Employment and Skills Policy

(a) Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy

The Panel was presented with a report to update members on the development of the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy (LIIS) and how the employment and skills agenda links to the development.

The Government’s national industrial White Paper set out five foundations for delivering the vision for a transformed economy – ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places. It also stated that Government would be agreeing Local Industrial Strategies with local enterprise partnership areas, starting with the mayoral combined authorities in March 2019.

At the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board on 29 November 2017, it was agreed to begin the development of a LIIS as a replacement for the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The decision was endorsed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority on 14 December. Progress reports on the development of a LIIS have been discussed at the most recent LEP and Combined Authority Boards. Building on the SEP, the LIIS will form a key component of an agile, long-term strategic framework aimed at driving growth, boosting productivity and earning power for a post 2030 economy. The key points are set out below:

- Emerging priorities for our Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy.
- Transformative private sector leadership in the Leeds City Region to tackle the growing productivity gap.
- The Leeds City Region Transformed by Tech.
- Maximising the impact of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail through the development of inclusive growth corridors in the Leeds City Region.

The Panel was asked to note the update on the development of a Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy and feedback any thoughts on the strategic framework and emerging proposals and comment on the proposals for a re-refresh of the Employment and Skills Plan.

Panel members requested a workshop be arranged before the next panel meeting to discuss the refresh of the employment and skills plan in more detail.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update on the development of a Local Industrial Strategy be noted.
- (ii) That feedback on the strategic framework and the proposals for a re-refresh of the Employment and Skills Plan be noted.

(b) National Careers Strategy

The Panel was presented with a report to update members on the National Careers Strategy and what this means for the Leeds City Region and provide information regarding the Skills Advisory Panel pilot.

The Government's Careers Strategy was published on 4 December 2017. The strategy stresses the important links to Industrial Strategy and the new technical routes and that having clear routes and information (including labour market information) is vital to helping career choices.

The Panel was asked to note the key points from the Careers Strategy and the opportunities for the region, give their views on what would make a successful Careers Hub, to enable officers to respond to any proposals put forward by the CEC and note the information regarding the Skills Advisory Panel and consider what additional labour market information would be beneficial.

Detailed discussion took place regarding the opportunity to pilot a Careers Hub in the region. Further guidance is expected in April and the Panel was keen that further exploration is undertaken once full information was received.

Resolved:

- (i) That the key points from the Careers Strategy and the opportunities for the region be noted.
- (ii) That members views on what would make a successful careers hub to enable officers to respond to any proposals put forward by the CEC be noted.
- (iii) That the information regarding the Skills Advisory Panel be noted

- (iv) That the Panel discussed what additional labour market information would be beneficial and members comments be noted.

(c) T-Level Consultation

The Panel was presented with a report to update members on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's response to the Government's consultation on the implementation of T levels.

The Department for Education's consultation on the implementation of T levels closed on the 8 February 2018. The Combined Authority has responded, this response was shared with partner councils and with panel members for comment and clearance. The Combined Authority's response focuses on the high level principles behind T levels, whether the policy intention behind them will help to address local labour market needs and skills shortages. Technical questions on the design and practical delivery of the qualifications are best answered by the further education (FE) colleges within the region.

Resolved: That the update on the Combined Authority's response to the Government's consultation on the implementation of T levels be noted.

(d) European Social Fund Overview

The Panel was presented with a report to provide an overview of the current position of the Leeds City Region European Social Fund programme.

A presentation was given to the panel regarding European Social Fund detailing progress to date and future plans.

There is currently £35 million unallocated relating to enhancing access to lifelong learning. The funding focuses on improving the skills of individuals to meeting their goals and needs of the local economy, primarily training, advising or supporting individuals, including those in work but at risk due to skills deficiencies or facing redundancy. The Panel was asked for their views regarding interventions which could be developed to meet the needs of employers and individuals currently in work.

Detailed discussion took place and the Panel suggested that Officers explore the following themes: upskilling individuals at risk of automation; supporting sustained employment; developing career progression plans; educating employers about how skills link to productivity and developing progression routes within organisations.

Resolved: That the views of the Panel members on the future direction of uncommitted funds and the content of the presentation be noted.

7. Further Education Developments

The Panel was presented with a report updating developments within further education (FE) in the Leeds City Region. The Panel was asked to note and comment on the developments within the FE sector.

The reviews with the seven West Yorkshire FE colleges of Delivery Agreements have now been completed. A light touch review will take place during June and July 2018, when the headline measures will be reviewed. Outcomes of the review will feed into the refresh of current agreements following the formal review planned for the Autumn after a full academic year's activity.

Resolved: That the comments of the Panel on the developments within the FE sector be noted.

8. Reports from Advisory Panels on Employment and Skills Plan Themes

(e) Cross-Cutting Themes

The Panel was presented with a report on work to progress the priorities and actions in the cross-cutting themes in the Employment and Skills Plan "More and Better Apprenticeships" and "Raising the Bar on High Level Skills".

Apprenticeship priorities and activities for 2018/19 have been identified as follows:

- Continue actively to engage the 80% of businesses across the Leeds City Region who have never offered apprenticeships before.
- Continue to provide support to apprenticeship levy paying employers to plan the usage of their levy contribution, including the transfer of up to 10% of the annual value of levy funds from April 2018.
- Launch a new apprenticeship grant for employers.
- Continue to raise awareness of apprenticeships within schools.
- Continue to work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop degree apprenticeship offer.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Panel's comments on the progress of activity against the More and Better Apprenticeships and Raising the Bar on High Level Skills priorities be noted.

(f) Great Education Connected to Business

The Panel was presented with a report to update on work to progress

the priorities and actions in the “Great Education Connection to Business” priority in the Employment and Skills Plan. This included:

- Advisory Group Report
- Enterprise Advisor Network
- Bradford Opportunity Area
- Futuregoals – careers campaign
- Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)
- Headteacher Advisory Network

Resolved: That the update and comments on the progress of activity against the “Great Education Connected to Business” priorities be noted.

(g) Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent

The Panel was presented with a report on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the “Building Workforce Skills and Attracting Talent” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan.

The Panel was asked to consider, a proposed approach to monitoring trends in local labour demand, focusing specifically on the City Regions three priority skills areas of construction / infrastructure, engineering and manufacturing and digital.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the comments and feedback on the usefulness of the analysis contained in the report be noted.
- (iii) That the comments of the Panel on the qualifications proposed to be delivered through the Career Learning pilot be noted.
- (iv) That the comments of the Panel on the progress against the building workforce skills and attracting talent priorities be noted.

(h) Employability, Accessing jobs and realising potential

The Panel was presented with a report on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the “Employability, Accessing jobs and Realising Potential” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan and asked to note and comment on progress:.

- Advisory Group Report
- Social Prescribing Pilot – Work Wellness Service
- DWP Work and Health Green Paper: Improving Lives – the future of work, health and disability.

Resolved:

- (i) That members comments on the progress of the Work Wellness Service be noted.
- (ii) That the progress made against the “Employability Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan be noted.

9. Employment and Skills Panel Review

The current ESP structure has been in place since the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Plan was published in 2016. ESP meetings were made public in September 2017.

The Panel was asked to provide feedback and give consideration on how they would like to develop the discussion points provided

- What works well and what do you find useful?
- What does not work well and does not add value?

Panel members discussed the points and made the following comments: A comprehensive induction for new members is required in order to understand the role, particularly regarding funding terminology; the Panel is useful for sharing intelligence and information but could use individual members skills more effectively; how can private sector insights be used to increase the impact?; how can the value of the panel be amplified? Agenda items that allow for future gazing around topics such as automation are very useful.

Resolved: That the views of the Panel members be noted.

10. Business Planning and Budget 2018/19

The Panel was presented with a report to advise of the work underway to progress business and budget planning for 2018/19.

At the last meeting of the Combined Authority in February, the budget and outline business plan for 2018/19 was agreed, following consultation with the LEP Board in January.

Resolved: That the business plan and budget for 2018/19 be noted.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 1 June 2018, 10AM Committee Room A, Wellington House, Leeds.